

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 /075 W
-----033069 241137Z /10

R 232205Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7681
INFO PANCANAL
USSOUTHCOM
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PN, SHUM, OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: REPORTED KILLING BY NATIONAL GUARD

SUMMARY: TWELVE PERSONS, INCLUDING OPPOSITION
PANAMENISTA PARTY SYMPATHIZERS, WERE ARRESTED BY THE
NATIONAL GUARD JUNE 16 AND ALLEGEDLY BEATEN; ONE DIED
AS RESULT. PANAMENISTAS ARE PUBLICLY PROTESTING THE
INCIDENT AND HAVE SENT AMBASSADOR JORDEN AND OTHERS
LETTERS ON IT. END SUMMARY.

1. TWO DIFFERING ACCOUNTS HAVE SURFACED OF AN INCIDENT
WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO
PANAMA. ACCORDING TO "MATUTINO" OF JUNE 21, A 44-YEAR-
OLD PANAMANIAN, ROMAN RIVERA MONTENEGRO, WAS BEING HELD
BY THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN) IN LA CHORRERA (ABOUT
30 MILES WEST OF PANAMA CITY) WHEN HE WAS BEATEN AND
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KILLED IN AN "IRRESPONSIBLE, VIOLENT, WILD ACTION" BY A
GN OFFICIAL. OTHER PRISONERS WERE ALSO HARMED. AS
ELABORATED IN A RADIO REPORT ON JUNE 22, RIVERA, A
PANAMENISTA, AND ELEVEN "FELLOW PARTISANS" WERE ARRESTED
IN THE TOWN OF CAPIRA AND TAKEN TO A GN HEADQUARTERS IN
NEARBY LA CHORRERA. THEY WERE ACCUSED OF ATTACKING A
PASSENGER BUS ON ITS WAY TO THE WELCOMING CEREMONY IN

PANAMA CITY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER. REPORTEDLY, THE CASE IS "UNDER INVESTIGATION".

2. ACCORDING TO THE PANAMENISTA PARTY (THE OPPOSITION PARTY HEADED BY FORMER PRESIDENT ARNULFO ARIAS), RIVERA IS A PANAMENISTA BUT NOT AN ACTIVE ONE. HE AND ELEVEN OTHERS WERE ARRESTED FOR THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE PANAMENISTA PARTY AND FOR NOT COOPERATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT BY ATTENDING THE WELCOME RALLY FOR CARTER. ALL TWELVE, INCLUDING A MENTALLY RETARDED YOUNG MAN, WERE BEATEN SEVERELY BY SEVERAL GUARD OFFICIALS. AS A RESULT, RIVERA DIED AND TWO OTHERS ARE STILL HOSPITALIZED.

3. THE EMBASSY HAS CONTACTED THE GOVERNMENT ON THIS CASE AND HOPES TO OBTAIN ITS VERSION OF THE STORY NEXT WEEK. MEANWHILE, THE PANAMENISTA PARTY CLAIMS IT WILL WRITE TO THE AMBASSADORS OF ALL THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT LAST WEEKEND'S TREATY RATIFICATION CEREMONIES. A LETTER HAS ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED FOR AMBASSADOR JORDEN. THE PARTY ALSO INTENDS TO CONTACT THE OAS INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. A PANAMENISTA LEADER TOLD US HIS PARTY'S MAIN CONCERN AT THIS POINT IS THAT THIS KIND OF TREATMENT OF THE OPPOSITION BE HALTED BEFORE IT BECOMES COMMON PRACTICE OR GETS OUT OF HAND.
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4. THE EMBASSY WILL KEEP THE DEPARTMENT ADVISED OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND OF THE FACTS OF THE CASE AS THEY ARE CLARIFIED. MOORE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED KILLING BY NATIONAL GUARD SUMMARY: TWELVE PERSONS, INCLUDING OPPOSITION PANAMENISTA PARTY SYMPATHIZERS, WERE ARRESTED BY T
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, OVIP, PINS, PN, (CARTER, JIMMY)
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